

XXX.—*A reply to Messrs. Robinson and Kloss, with some further critical remarks by E. C. STUART BAKER, M.B.O.U.*

UNDER the title "Notes on recently described Races of Siamese and Malayan Birds" Messrs. Robinson and Kloss have written some criticisms to which I feel a reply is necessary, in so far as they concern certain races which have been described as new by myself and by the authors of the criticisms. As regards the remarks made anent the laxity of certain authors in reference to localities, the making of types, and full information on various points no one can take objection, but we may all hope that Messrs. Robinson and Kloss having realized the importance of these features will, in future, practise with the same wisdom as that with which they preach.

† *Eupetes macrocerus griseiventris.*

Stuart Baker, Bull. B. O. C. xxxviii. 1917, p. 8.

It is said that this race cannot be maintained because it is founded on three specimens only from Siam, and this assertion is made on the examination of *one* adult specimen only from the same country. Messrs. Robinson and Kloss admit that this is the case, so perhaps it is unnecessary for me to say more; but it may be as well to record the fact that the three Siamese specimens in Mr. Herbert's collection examined by me are all fully adult fine skins, and they show well the differences as given by me in comparison with a very large number, over forty specimens, from elsewhere.

† *Corythocichla brevicaudata herberti.*

Stuart Baker, loc. cit. p. 10.

Messrs. Robinson and Kloss are perfectly right, and my name becomes only a synonym of *C. b. leucosticta*—a very regrettable oversight on my part.

† *Stachyridopsis ruffrons obscura.*

Stuart Baker, loc. cit. p. 10.

I cannot agree with Messrs. Robinson and Kloss's conclusions in regard to this subspecies. The birds described

by me are quite different from true *S. r. poliogaster*, and their bright, but pale, fulvous breasts alone suffice to distinguish them at a glance from that bird. *S. r. poliogaster*, of which there is a very big series of skins in the British Museum, even when very old and faded, is still much darker and more rufous above than is my new subspecies.

‡ ***Pomatorhinus olivaceus siamensis*.**

Stuart Baker, loc. cit. p. 10.

I have compared Mr. Herbert's specimens of this subspecies with the types of Herbert's *fastidiosus*, and they certainly do not seem to be the same. *P. o. siamensis* is a much redder bird than *P. o. fastidiosus*, with more and richer red on the sides of the neck and flanks. With more material the two forms may be found to run into one another, and, if so, my name must be suppressed and become a synonym of *fastidiosus*. For the present they must both be retained.

† ***Cyanoderma erythropterum sordida*.**

Stuart Baker, loc. cit. p. 10.

I find that I must also maintain this subspecies, and I cannot agree that all birds, both from the Peninsula and islands, are the same. It appears to me that northern birds are distinctly darker than southern, though specimens from Java and Sumatra seem to be one and the same. The skins in the British Museum do not appear to have faded, and doubtless they are not affected so much by age as they are in a tropical climate. Some of the oldest skins in the huge series in the British Museum are the darkest of all.

The type-locality for *C. erythropterum erythropterum* is Singapore.

† ***Setaria rufifrons*.**

Setaria lepidcephala (Gray); Kloss, Ibis, 1918, p. 203.

Cabanis's description of *rufifrons* is as follows:—"Upper side olive-brown, tail rusty red, underside whitish, the scale-like feathers of the forehead and anterior crown light ferruginous and with paler shaft-stripes and blackish tips. Length $6\frac{1}{4}$ " ; bill $\frac{3}{4}$ " ; wing 3" ; tail $2\frac{1}{2}$."

The wing, it will be noticed, is only 76.2 mm. and not 80 mm. as given by Finsch. Description and size therefore agree well with the bird hitherto accepted as *Setaria rufifrons*, and this name must stand. Mr. Kloss was, of course, misled by Finsch's description.

† *Mixornis rubricapilla sulphurea*.

Kloss, Ibis, 1918, p. 204.

Rippon's type of *Stachyridopsis sulphurea* is *Mixornis rubricapilla* pure and simple. Under any circumstances the specific name will be *sumatrana*, that being the oldest now that *gularis* cannot stand, and this is indeed pointed out very correctly by Kloss.

I cannot myself distinguish Siamese birds from *rubricapilla*, but if they are to be separated, Gyldenstolpe's name, *minor* (Kongl. Sv. Vet.-Akad. Handl. lvi. 1916, No. 2, p. 60), must stand.

† *Chloropsis aurifrons inornatus*.

Kloss, Ibis, 1918, p. 198.

Mr. Herbert's specimens confirm Mr. Kloss's diagnosis of his new form.

† *Pycnonotus blanfordi robinsoni*.

Grant, Fasc. Mal. Zool. iii. 1905, p. 85.

I cannot distinguish between *P. b. blanfordi* and *P. b. robinsoni* as I find it possible to get a good series of the typical *blanfordi* from the extreme south, and, *vice versa*, an equally good series of the so-called *P. b. robinsoni* from northern Burma.

† *Prinia inornata blanfordi*.

Kloss, Ibis, 1918, p. 211.

Mr. Kloss has made the same mistake as I did when naming some birds collected by Mr. Williamson. His specimens, like Mr. Williamson's, are, of course, my new subspecies *P. i. herberti*.

† *Chalcoparia singalensis koratensis*.

Kloss, Ibis, 1918, p. 218.

I cannot confidently confirm Mr. Kloss's diagnosis of this new subspecies. Mr. Herbert's fine series of sixteen specimens agreed so well with Mr. Kloss's description that when I first examined them I, without hesitation, put them down under his name. Later on I again examined those and the Museum specimens, and I find that the apparent differences are mostly the result of make-up of the skins. Tenasserim birds, again, do not appear to be different from others.

Kloss points out Oates's mistake in his description of the young bird. As the former shows, the young bird differs in having no rufous on the throat as well as in other minor particulars.

Buchanga atra longus.

• Kloss, Ibis, 1918, p. 227.

Buchanga leucophæa.

Id., *ibid*.

Dissemurus paradiseus paradiseus.

Dissemurus paradiseus malayensis (Jerdon); Kloss, Ibis, 1918, pp. 228-229.

I have dealt with these Dicteridæ at length in a recent article in 'Novitates Zoologicæ' and need not comment further here.

† *Graucalus macei macei*.

Kloss, Ibis, 1918, p. 192.

This should be my *G. m. siamensis*. The Siamese bird differs from the Indian in that the female has a unicoloured throat and upper breast instead of being barred on these parts.

† *Volvocivora koratensis*.

Kloss, Ibis, 1918, p. 193.

This is nothing but Hume's *intermedia*. A specimen obtained by Mr. Herbert at Pakjong is very pale with pure white under tail-coverts and a wing of 121 mm. It agrees exactly with some specimens in the British

Museum named *intermedia* by Hume, some of which have pure white under tail-coverts, whilst some have them white with greyish bases.

† *Volvocivora polioptera*.

Kloss, Ibis, 1918, p. 194.

Kloss has revived the name *polioptera* Sharpe, on the grounds that three birds obtained by him at Koh Lak show that Sharpe's original diagnosis was correct and that *polioptera* is a different bird to typical *neglecta*. Sharpe himself, however, later on agreed with Oates that the two supposed species are one and the same and impossible to divide, and there is no doubt that the three actual specimens named *polioptera* by Ogilvie-Grant are nothing but young *neglecta*. This is confirmed by the specimens obtained by Herbert at Tung Song and Klong Wanghip, which are all, without doubt, referable to the latter species.

† *Otocompsa flaviventris minor*.

Kloss, Ibis, 1918, p. 200.

Mr. Kloss names this subspecies on a single small female from south-west Siam, rightly pointing out its small size compared with typical *O. f. flaviventris* from Bengal.

Gyldenstolpe's Bulbul, *O. f. johnsoni*, is, however, common in south-west Siam, as is shown by the splendid series obtained by Mr. Herbert and now in the British Museum, and Kloss's *minor* is probably nothing but a young bird of this subspecies, an opinion in which I have no doubt Mr. Kloss would have concurred had he had Mr. Herbert's birds before him for examination.

I propose to comment later on on some of Mr. Kloss's new subspecies of Woodpecker which do not appear to stand the test of an examination of material probably much in excess of that at the command of Mr. Kloss. It is to be regretted, perhaps, that with birds so very variable individually Mr. Kloss has attempted to found subspecies on single specimens, a practice which he and Mr. Robinson so wisely hold in abhorrence as a general rule.